


RILEY SONGS OF SUMMER



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RILEY SONGS OF SUMMER





RILEY

SONGS OF SUMMER

JAMES
WHITCOMB RILEY

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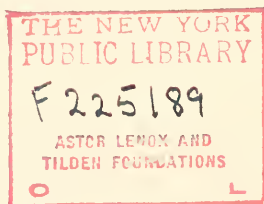
James Whitcomb Riley

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To
LEE O. HARRIS
TEACHER, FRIEND AND COMRADE



THE SUMMER-TIME

*O, the summer-time to-day
Makes my words
Jes' flip up and fly away
Like the birds!
—'Taint no use to try to sing,
With yer language on the wing,
Jes' too glad fer anything
But to stray
Where it may
Thue the sunny summer weather of the day!*

*Lordy! what a summer-time
Fer to sing!
But my words flops out o' rhyme,
And they wing
Furder yit beyent the view
Than the swallers ever flew,
Er a mortal wanted to—
'Less his eye
Struck the sky
Ez he kind o' sort o' thought he'd like to fly!*

*Ef I COULD sing—sweet and low—
And my tongue
Could twitter, don't you know,
Ez I sung
Of the summer-time, 'y Jings!
All the words and birds and things
That kin warble, and hes wings,
Would jes' swear
And declare
That they never heerd sich singin' anywhere!*





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RILEY SONGS OF SUMMER





A SUMMER'S DAY

THE Summer's put the idy in
My head that I'm a boy ag'in;
And all around's so bright and gay
I want to put my team away,
And jest git out whare I can lay
And soak my hide full of the day!
But work is work, and must be done—
Yit, as I work, I have my fun,
Jest fancyin' these furries here
Is childhood's paths onc't more so dear:—

A SUMMER'S DAY

And as I walk through medder-lands,
And country lanes, and swampy trails
Whare long bullrushes bresh my hands;
And, tilted on the ridered rails
Of deadnin' fences, "Old Bob White"
Whissels his name in high delight,
And whirrs away. I wunder still
Whichever way a boy's feet will—
Whare trees has fell, with tangled tops
Whare dead leaves shakes, I stop fer breth,
Heerin' the acorn as it drops—
H'istin' my chin up still as deth,
And watchin' clos't, with upturned eyes,
The tree where Mr. Squirrel tries
To hide hisse'f above the limb,
But lets his own tale tell on him.
I wunder on in deeper glooms—
Git hungry, hearin' female cries
From old farm-houses, whare perfumes
Of harvest dinners seems to rise
And ta'nt a feller, hart and brane,
With memories he can't explane.



A SUMMER'S DAY

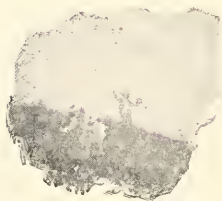
I wunder through the underbresh,
 Whare pig-tracks, pintin' to'rds the crick,
Is picked and printed in the fresh
 Black bottom-lands, like wimmern pick
Theyr pie-crusts with a fork, some way,
When bakin' fer camp-meetin' day.
I wunder on and on and on,
Tel my gray hair and beard is gone,
And ev'ry wrinkle on my brow
Is rubbed clean out and shaddered now
With curls as brown and fare and fine
As tenderls of the wild grape-vine
That ust to climb the highest tree
To keep the ripest ones fer me.
I wunder still, and here I am
Wadin' the ford below the dam—
The worter chucklin' round my knee
 At hornet-welt and bramble-scratch,
And me a-slippin' 'crost to see
 Ef Tyner's plums is ripe, and size
The old man's wortermelon-patch,
 With juicy mouth and drouthy eyes.

A SUMMER'S DAY

Then, after sich a day of mirth
And happiness as worlds is wurth—

So tired that heaven seems nigh about,—
The sweetest tiredness on earth

Is to git home and flatten out—
So tired you can't lay flat enough,
And sorto' wish that you could spread
Out like molasses on the bed,
And jest drip off the aidges in
The dreams that never comes ag'in.





AN OLD FRIEND

HHEY, Old Midsummer! are you here again,
With all your harvest-store of olden joys,—
Vast overhanging meadow-lands of rain,
And drowsy dawns, and noons when golden grain
Nods in the sun, and lazy truant boys
Drift ever listlessly adown the day,
Too full of joy to rest, and dreams to play.

AN OLD FRIEND

The same old Summer, with the same old smile
 Beaming upon us in the same old way
We knew in childhood! Though a weary while
Since that far time, yet memories reconcile
 The heart with odorous breaths of clover-hay;
And again I hear the doves, and the sun streams
 through
The old barn-door just as it used to do.

And so it seems like welcoming a friend—
 An old, *old* friend, upon his coming home
From some far country—coming home to spend
Long, loitering days with me: And I extend
 My hand in rapturous glee:—And so you've
 come!—
Ho, I'm so glad! Come in and take a chair:
Well this is just like *old* times, I declare!



McFEETERS' FOURTH

IT was needless to say 'twas a glorious day,
And to boast of it all in that spread-eagle way
That our Forefathers had since the hour of the birth
Of this most patriotic republic on earth!
But 'twas justice, of course, to admit that the sight
Of the old Stars-and-Stripes was a thing of delight
In the eyes of a fellow, however he tried
To look on the day with a dignified pride
That meant not to brook any turbulent glee
Or riotous flourish of loud jubilee!

McFEETERS' FOURTH

So argued McFeeters, all grim and severe,
Who the long night before, with a feeling of fear,
Had slumbered but fitfully, hearing the swish
Of the sky-rocket over his roof, with the wish
That the boy-fiend who fired it were fast to the end
Of the stick to for ever and ever ascend!
Or to hopelessly ask why the boy with the horn
And its horrible havoc had ever been born!
Or to wish, in his wakefulness, staring aghast,
That this Fourth of July were as dead as the last!

So, yesterday morning, McFeeters arose,
With a fire in his eyes, and a cold in his nose,
And a guttural voice in appropriate key
With a temper as gruff as a temper could be.
He growled at the servant he met on the stair,
Because he was whistling a national air,
And he growled at the maid on the balcony, who
Stood enrapt with the tune of "The Red-White-and-
Blue"

That a band was discoursing like mad in the street,
With drumsticks that banged and with cymbals that
beat.

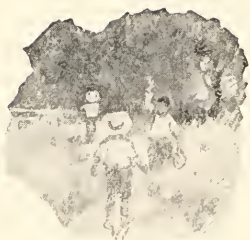


McFEETERS' FOURTH

And he growled at his wife, as she buttoned his vest,
And applausively pinned a rosette on his breast
Of the national colors, and lured from his purse
Some change for the boys—for fire-crackers—or
worse;

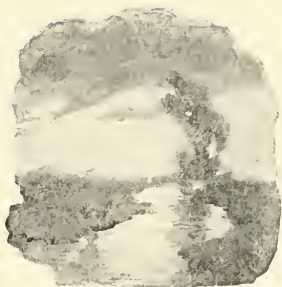
And she pointed with pride to a soldier in blue
In a frame on the wall, and the colors there, too;
And he felt, as he looked on the features, the glow
The painter found there twenty long years ago,
And a passionate thrill in his breast, as he felt
Instinctively round for the sword in his belt.

What was it that hung like a mist o'er the room?—
The tumult without—and the music—the boom
Of the cannon—the blare of the bugle and fife?—
No matter!—McFeeters was kissing his wife,
And laughing and crying and waving his hat
Like a genuine soldier, and crazy, at that!
—*Was* it needless to say 'twas a glorious day
And to boast of it all in that spread-eagle way
That our Forefathers had since the hour of the birth
Of this most patriotic republic on earth?



WHEN JUNE IS HERE

WHEN June is here—what art have we to sing
The whiteness of the lilies midst the green
On noon-tranced lawns? Or flash of roses seen
Like redbirds' wings? Or earliest ripening
Prince-Harvest apples, where the cloyed bees cling
Round winey juices oozing down between
The peckings of the robin, while we lean
In under-grasses, lost in marveling?
Or the cool term of morning, and the stir
Of odorous breaths from wood and meadow walks,
The bobwhite's liquid yodel, and the whirl
Of sudden flight; and, where the milkmaid talks
Across the bars, on tilted barley-stalks
The dewdrops' glint in webs of gossamer?



THE SHOWER

THE landscape, like the awed face of a child,
Grew curiously blurred; a hush of death
Fell on the fields, and in the darkened wild
The zephyr held its breath.

No wavering glamour-work of light and shade
Dappled the shivering surface of the brook;
The frightened ripples in their ambushade
Of willows thrilled and shook.

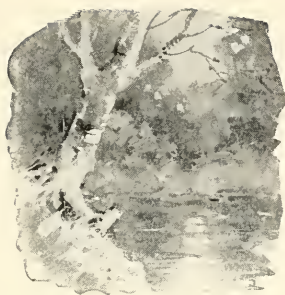
THE SHOWER

The sullen day grew darker, and anon
Dim flashes of pent anger lit the sky;
With rumbling wheels of wrath came rolling on
The storm's artillery.

The cloud above put on its blackest frown,
And then, as with a vengeful cry of pain,
The lightning snatched it, ripped and flung it down
In ravelled shreds of rain:

While I, transfigured by some wondrous art,
Bowed with the thirsty lilies to the sod,
My empty soul brimmed over, and my heart
Drenched with the love of God.





ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK

ON the banks o' Deer Crick! There's the place fer
me!—

Worter slidin' past ye jes as clair as it kin be:—
See yer shadder in it, and the shadder o' the sky,
And the shadder o' the buzzard as he goes a-lazein'
by;

ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK

Shadder o' the pizen-vines, and shadder o' the
trees—

And I purt'-nigh said the shadder o' the sunshine
and the breeze!

Well—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the
sea;

On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

On the banks o' Deer Crick—mild er two from
town—

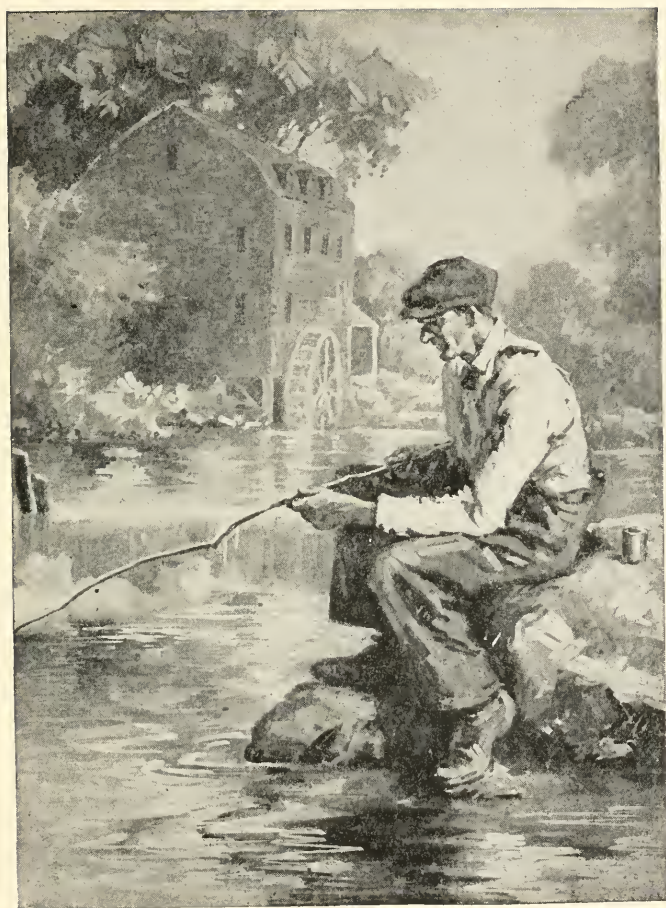
'Long up where the mill-race comes a-loafin'
down,—

Like to git up in there—'mongst the sycamores—

And watch the worter at the dam, a-frothin' as she
pours:

Crawl out on some old log, with my hook and line,
Where the fish is jes so thick, you kin see 'em shine
As they flicker round yer bait, *coaxin'* you to jerk,
Tel yer tired ketchin' of 'em, mighty nigh, as *work!*

On the banks o' Deer Crick!—Allus my delight
Jes to be around there—take it day er night!—
Watch the snipes and killdees foolin' half the day—
Er these-'ere little worter-bugs skootin' ever' way!—



ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK

Snakefeeders glancin' round, er dartin' out o' sight;
And dew-fall, and bullfrogs, and lightnin'-bugs at
night—

Stars up through the tree-tops—er in the crick be-
low,—

And smell o' mussrat through the dark clean from
the old b'y-o!

Er take a tromp, some Sund'y, say, 'way up to
"Johnson's Hole,"

And find where he's had a fire, and hid his fishin'-
pole:

Have yer "dog-leg" with ye and yer pipe and "cut-
and-dry"—

Pocketful o' corn-bred, and slug er two o' rye,—
Soak yer hide in sunshine and waller in the shade—
Like the Good Book tells us—"where there're none
to make afraid!"

Well!—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the
sea—

On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!



AUGUST

A DAY of torpor in the sullen heat
Of Summer's passion: In the sluggish stream
The panting cattle lave their lazy feet,
With drowsy eyes, and dream.

Long since the winds have died, and in the sky
There lives no cloud to hint of Nature's grief;
The sun glares ever like an evil eye,
And withers flower and leaf.

AUGUST

Upon the gleaming harvest-field remote
The thresher lies deserted, like some old
Dismantled galleon that hangs afloat
Upon a sea of gold.

The yearning cry of some bewildered bird
Above an empty nest, and truant boys
Along the river's shady margin heard—
A harmony of noise—

A melody of wrangling voices blent
With liquid laughter, and with rippling calls
Of piping lips and thrilling echoes sent
To mimic waterfalls.

And through the hazy veil the atmosphere
Has draped about the gleaming face of Day,
The sifted glances of the sun appear
In splinterings of spray.

The dusty highway, like a cloud of dawn,
Trails o'er the hillside, and the passer-by,
A tired ghost in misty shroud, toils on
His journey to the sky.

AUGUST

And down across the valley's drooping sweep,
 Withdrawn to farthest limit of the glade,
The forest stands in silence, drinking deep
 Its purple wine of shade.

The gossamer floats up on phantom wing;
 The sailor-vision voyages the skies
And carries into chaos everything
 That freights the weary eyes:

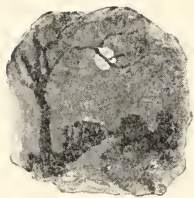
Till, throbbing on and on, the pulse of heat
 Increases—reaches—passes fever's height,
And Day sinks into slumber, cool and sweet,
 Within the arms of Night.



PANSIES

PANSIES! Pansies! How I love you, pansies!
Jaunty-faced, laughing-lipped and dewy-eyed
with glee;
Would my song but blossom in little five-leaf stanzas
As delicate in fancies
As your beauty is to me!

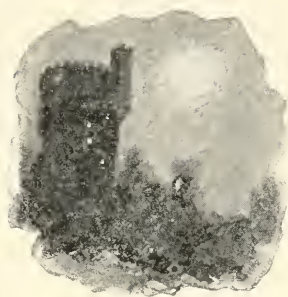
But my eyes shall smile on you, and my hands infold
you,
Pet, caress, and lift you to the lips that love you so,
That, shut ever in the years that may mildew or
mould you,
My fancy shall behold you
Fair as in the long ago.



A DREAM OF INSPIRATION

TO loll back, in a misty hammock, swung
From tip to tip of a slim crescent moon
That gems some royal-purple night of June—
To dream of songs that never have been sung
Since the first stars were stilled and God was young
And heaven as lonesome as a lonesome tune:
To lie thus, lost to earth, with lids aswoon;
By curious, cool winds back and forward flung,
With fluttering hair, blurred eyes, and utter ease
Adrift like lazy blood through every vein;
And then,—the pulse of unvoiced melodies
Timing the raptured sense to some refrain
That knows nor words, nor rhymes, nor euphonies,
Save Fancy's hinted chime of unknown seas.





IN THE SOUTH

THERE is a princess in the South
About whose beauty rumors hum
Like honey-bees about the mouth
Of roses dewdrops falter from;
And O her hair is like the fine
Clear amber of a jostled wine
In tropic revels; and her eyes
Are blue as rifts of Paradise.

IN THE SOUTH

Such beauty as may none before
Kneel daringly, to kiss the tips
Of fingers such as knights of yore
Had died to lift against their lips:
Such eyes as might the eyes of gold
Of all the stars of night behold
With glittering envy, and so glare
In dazzling splendor of despair.

So, were I but a minstrel, deft
At weaving, with the trembling strings
Of my glad harp, the warp and weft
Of rondels such as rapture sings,—
I'd loop my lyre across my breast,
Nor stay me till my knee found rest
In midnight banks of bud and flower
Beneath my lady's lattice-bower.

And there, drenched with the teary dew,
I'd woo her with such wondrous art
As well might stanch the songs that ooze
Out of the mockbird's breaking heart;
So light, so tender, and so sweet
Should be the words I would repeat,
Her casement, on my gradual sight,
Would blossom as a lily might.



POMONA

O H, the golden afternoon!—
Like a ripened summer day
That had fallen oversoon
In the weedy orchard-way—
As an apple, ripe in June.

He had left his fishrod leant
O'er the footlog by the spring—
Clomb the hill-path's high ascent,
Whence a voice, down showering,
Lured him, wondering as he went.

POMONA

Not the voice of bee nor bird,
 Nay, nor voice of man nor child,
Nor the creek's shoal-alto heard
 Blent with warblings sweet and wild
Of the midstream, music-stirred.

'Twas a goddess! As the air
 Swirled to eddying silence, he
Glimpsed about him, half aware
 Of some subtle sorcery
Woven round him everywhere.

Suavest slopes of pleasaunce, sown
 With long lines of fruited trees
Weighed o'er grasses all unmown
 But by scythings of the breeze
In prone swaths that flashed and shone

Like silk locks of Faunus sleeked
 This, that way, and contrawise,
Thro' whose bredes ambrosial leaked
 Oily amber sheens and dyes,
Starred with petals purple-freaked.

POMONA

Here the bellflower swayed and swung,
 Greenly belfried high amid
Thick leaves in whose covert sung
 Hermit-thrush, or katydid.
Or the glowworm nightly clung.

Here the damson, peach and pear;
 There the plum, in Tyrian tints,
Like great grapes in clusters rare;
 And the metal-heavy quince
Like a plummet dangled there.

All ethereal, yet all
 Most material,—a theme
Of some fabled festival—
 Save the fair face of his dream
Smiling o'er the orchard wall.

THEM FLOWERS

TAKE a feller 'at's sick and laid up on the shelf,
All-shaky, and ga'nted, and pore—
Jes all so knocked out he can't handle hisself
With a stiff upper-lip any more;
Shet him up all alone in the gloom of a room
As dark as the tomb, and as grim,
And then take and send him some roses in bloom,
And you can have fun out o' him!

You've ketched him 'fore now—when his liver was
sound
And his appetite notched like a saw—
A-mockin' you, mayby, fer romancin' round
With a big posy-bunch in yer paw;
But you ketch him, say, when his health is away,
And he's flat on his back in distress,
And *then* you kin trot out yer little bokay
And not be insulted, I guess!



THEM FLOWERS

You see, it's like this, what his weaknesses is,—
Them flowers makes him think of the days
Of his innocent youth, and that mother o' his,
And the roses that *she* us't to raise:—
So here, all alone with the roses you send—
Bein' sick and all trimbly and faint,—
My eyes is—my eyes is—my eyes is—old friend—
Is a-leakin'—I'm blamed ef they ain't!





LAUGHING SONG

SING us something full of laughter;
Tune your harp, and twang the strings
Till your glad voice, chirping after,
Mates the song the robin sings:
Loose your lips and let them flutter
Like the wings of wanton birds,—
Though they naught but laughter utter,
Laugh, and we'll not miss the words.

LAUGHING SONG

Sing in ringing tones that mingle
In a melody that flings
Joyous echoes in a jingle
Sweeter than the minstrel sings :
Sing of Winter, Spring or Summer,
Clang of war, or low of herds ;
Trill of cricket, roll of drummer—
Laugh, and we'll not miss the words.

Like the lisping laughter glancing
From the meadow brooks and springs,
Or the river's ripples dancing
To the tune the current sings—
Sing of Now, and the Hereafter ;
Let your glad song, like the birds',
Overflow with limpid laughter—
Laugh, and we'll not miss the words.



ME AND MARY

ALL my feelin's in the Spring
Gits so blame contrary,
I can't think of anything
Only me and Mary!
"Me and Mary!" all the time,
"Me and Mary!" like a rhyme,
Keeps a-dingin' on till I'm
Sick o' "Me and Mary!"



ME AND MARY

“Me and Mary! Ef us two
Only was together—
Playin’ like we used to do
In the Aprile weather!”
All the night and all the day
I keep wishin’ thataway
Till I’m gittin’ old and gray
Jes on “Me and Mary!”

Muddy yit along the pike
Sence the Winter’s freezin’,
And the orchard’s back’ard-like
Bloomin’ out this season;
Only heerd one bluebird yit—
Nary robin ner tomtit;
What’s the how and why of it?
’Spect it’s “Me and Mary!”

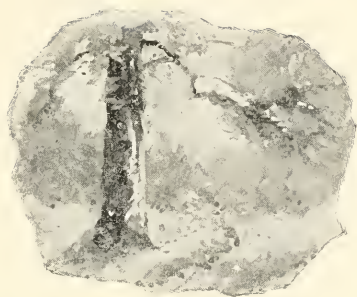
Me and Mary liked the birds—
That is, *Mary* sorto’
Liked ’em first, and afterwards,
W’y, I thought *I’d* ort’o.
And them birds—ef Mary stood
Right here with me, like she should—
They’d be singin’, them birds would,
All fer me and Mary.

ME AND MARY

Birds er not, I'm hopin' some
I can git to plowin'!
Ef the sun'll only come,
And the Lord allowin',
Guess to-morry I'll turn in
And git down to work ag'in;
This here loaferin' won't win,
Not fer me and Mary!

Fer a man that loves, like me,
And's afeard to name it,
Till some other feller, he
Gits the girl—dad-shame-it!
Wet er dry, er clouds er sun—
Winter gone er jes begun—
Outdoor work fer me er none,
No more "Me and Mary!"





A GLIMPSE OF PAN

I CAUGHT but a glimpse of him. Summer was
here,

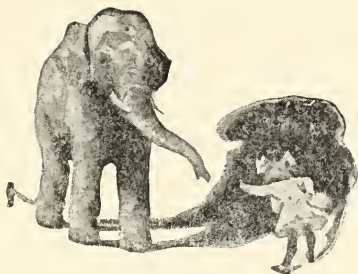
And I strayed from the town and its dust and heat
And walked in a wood, while the noon was near,
Where the shadows were cool, and the atmosphere
Was misty with fragrances stirred by my feet
From surges of blossoms that billowed sheer
O'er the grasses, green and sweet.

A GLIMPSE OF PAN

And I peered through a vista of leaning trees,
Tressed with long tangles of vines that swept
To the face of a river, that answered these
With vines in the wave like the vines in the breeze,
Till the yearning lips of the ripples crept
And kissed them, with quavering ecstasies,
And gurgled and laughed and wept.

And there, like a dream in a swoon, I swear
I saw Pan lying,—his limbs in the dew
And the shade, and his face in the dazzle and glare
Of the glad sunshine; while everywhere,
Over, across, and around him blew
Filmy dragonflies hither and there,
And little white butterflies, two and two,
In eddies of odorous air.





THE CIRCUS PARADE

THE Circus!—The Circus!—The throb of the
drums,
And the blare of the horns, as the Band-wagon
comes;
The clash and the clang of the cymbals that beat,
As the glittering pageant winds down the long
street!

In the Circus parade there is glory clean down
From the first spangled horse to the mule of the
Clown,
With the gleam and the glint and the glamour and
glare
Of the days of enchantment all glimmering there!

THE CIRCUS PARADE

And there are the banners of silvery fold
Caressing the winds with their fringes of gold,
And their high-lifted standards, with spear-tips
 aglow,
And the helmeted knights that go riding below.

There's the Chariot, wrought of some marvelous shell
The Sea gave to Neptune, first washing it well
With its fabulous waters of gold, till it gleams
Like the galleon rare of an Argonaut's dreams.

And the Elephant, too, (with his undulant stride
That rocks the high throne of a king in his pride),
That in jungles of India shook from his flanks
The tigers that leapt from the Jujubee-banks.

Here's the long, ever-changing, mysterious line
Of the Cages, with hints of their glories divine
From the barred little windows, cut high in the rear,
Where the close-hidden animals' noses appear.

Here's the Pyramid-car, with its splendor and flash,
And the Goddess on high, in a hot-scarlet sash
And a pen-wiper skirt!—Oh, the rarest of sights
Is this "Queen of the Air" in cerulean tights!



THE CIRCUS PARADE

Then the far-away clash of the cymbals, and then
The swoon of the tune ere it wakens again
With the capering tones of the gallant cornet
That go dancing away in a mad minuet.

The Circus!—The Circus!—The throb of the drums,
And the blare of the horns, as the Band-wagon
comes;
The clash and the clang of the cymbals that beat,
As the glittering pageant winds down the long
street.





A WRAITH OF SUMMERTIME

IN its color, shade and shine,
'Twas a summer warm as wine,
With an effervescent flavoring of flowered
 bough and vine,
And a fragrance and a taste
Of ripe roses gone to waste,
And a dreamy sense of sun- and moon- and
 star-light interlaced.

A WRAITH OF SUMMERTIME

'Twas a summer such as broods
O'er enchanted solitudes,
Where the hand of Fancy leads us through
 voluptuary moods,
And with lavish love out-pours
All the wealth of out-of-doors,
And woos our feet o'er velvet paths and
 honeysuckle floors.

'Twas a summertime long dead,—
And its roses, white and red,
And its reeds and water-lilies down along
 the river-bed,—
Oh, they all are ghostly things—
For the ripple never sings,
And the rocking lily never even rustles as
 it rings!



AT NINETY IN THE SHADE

HOT weather? Yes; but really not,
Compared with weather twice as hot.
Find comfort, then, in arguing thus,
And you'll pull through victorious!—
For instance, while you gasp and pant
And try to cool yourself—and can't—
With soda, cream and lemonade,
The heat at ninety in the shade,—
Just calmly sit and ponder o'er
These same degrees, with ninety more
On top of them, and so concede
The weather now is cool indeed!



AT NINETY IN THE SHADE

Think—as the perspiration dew
Your fevered brow, and seems to ooze
From out the ends of every hair—
Whole floods of it, with floods to spare—
Think, I repeat, the while the sweat
Pours down your spine—how hotter yet
Just ninety *more* degrees would be,
And bear *this* ninety patiently!
Think—as you mop your brow and hair,
With sticky feelings everywhere—
How ninety more degrees increase
Of heat like this would start the grease;
Or, think, as you exhausted stand,
A wilted “palmleaf” in each hand—
When the thermometer has done
With ease the lap of ninety-one;
Oh, think, I say, what heat might do
At one hundred and eighty-two—
Just twice the heat you now declare,
Complainingly, is hard to bear.
Or, as you watch the mercury
Mount, still elate, one more degree,
And doff your collar and cravat,
And rig a sponge up in your hat,

AT NINETY IN THE SHADE

And ask Tom, Harry, Dick, or Jim,
If this is hot enough for him—
Consider how the sun would pour
At one hundred and eighty-four—
Just twice the heat that seems to be
Affecting you unpleasantly,
The very hour that you might find
As cool as dew, were you inclined.
But why proceed when none will heed
Advice apportioned to the need?
Hot weather? Yes; but really not,
Compared with weather twice as hot!





IN SWIMMING-TIME

CLOUDS above, as white as wool,
Drifting over skies as blue
As the eyes of beautiful

Children when they smile at you :
Groves of maple, elm and beech,
With the sunshine sifted through
Branches, mingling each with each,
Dim with shade and bright with dew.

Stripling trees, and poplars hoar,
Hickory and sycamore,
And the drowsy dogwood, bowed
Where the ripples laugh aloud,

IN SWIMMING-TIME

And the crooning creek is stirred
To a gaiety that now
Mates the warble of the bird,
Teetering on the hazel-bough.

Grasses long and fine and fair
As your schoolboy-sweetheart's hair
Backward stroked and twirled and twined
By the fingers of the wind :
Vines and mosses interlinked
Down dark aisles and deep ravines,
Where the stream runs, willow-brinked,
Round a bend where some one leans,
Faint, and vague, and indistinct
As the like-reflected thing
In the current shimmering.

Childish voices, further on,
Where the truant stream has gone,
Vex the echoes of the wood
Till no word is understood—
Save that we are well aware
Happiness is hiding there:—



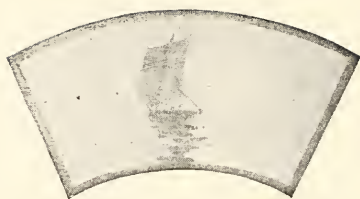
IN SWIMMING-TIME

There, in leafy coverts, nude
Little bodies poise and leap,
Spattering the solitude
And the silence, everywhere—
Mimic monsters of the deep!—

Wallowing in sandy shoals—
Plunging headlong out of sight,
And, with spurtings of delight,
Clutching hands, and slippery soles,
Climbing up the treacherous steep,
Over which the spring-board spurns
Each again as he returns!

Ah! the glorious carnival!
Purple lips—and chattering teeth—
Eyes that burn—But, in beneath,
Every care beyond recall—
Every task forgotten quite—
And again in dreams at night,
Dropping, drifting through it all!





WHILE THE MUSICIAN PLAYED

O IT was but a dream I had
While the musician played!—
And here the sky, and here the glad
Old ocean kissed the glade—
And here the laughing ripples ran,
And here the roses grew
That threw a kiss to every man
That voyaged with the crew.

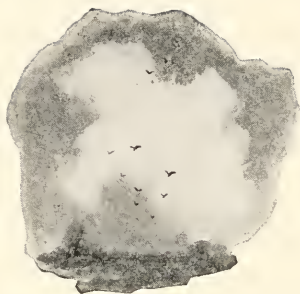
Our silken sails in lazy folds
Drooped in the breathless breeze:
As o'er a field of marigolds
Our eyes swam o'er the seas;
While here the eddies lisped and purled
Around the island's rim,
And up from out the underworld
We saw the mermen swim.

WHILE THE MUSICIAN PLAYED

And it was dawn and middle-day
And midnight—for the moon
On silver rounds across the bay
Had climbed the skies of June—
And there the glowing, glorious king
Of day ruled o'er his realm,
With stars of midnight glittering
About his diadem.

The seagull reeled on languid wing
In circles round the mast,
We heard the songs the sirens sing
As we went sailing past;
And up and down the golden sands
A thousand fairy throngs
Flung at us from their flashing hands
The echoes of their songs.

O, it was but a dream I had
While the musician played—
For here the sky, and here the glad
Old ocean kissed the glade;
And here the laughing ripples ran
And here the roses grew
That threw a kiss to every man
That voyaged with the crew.

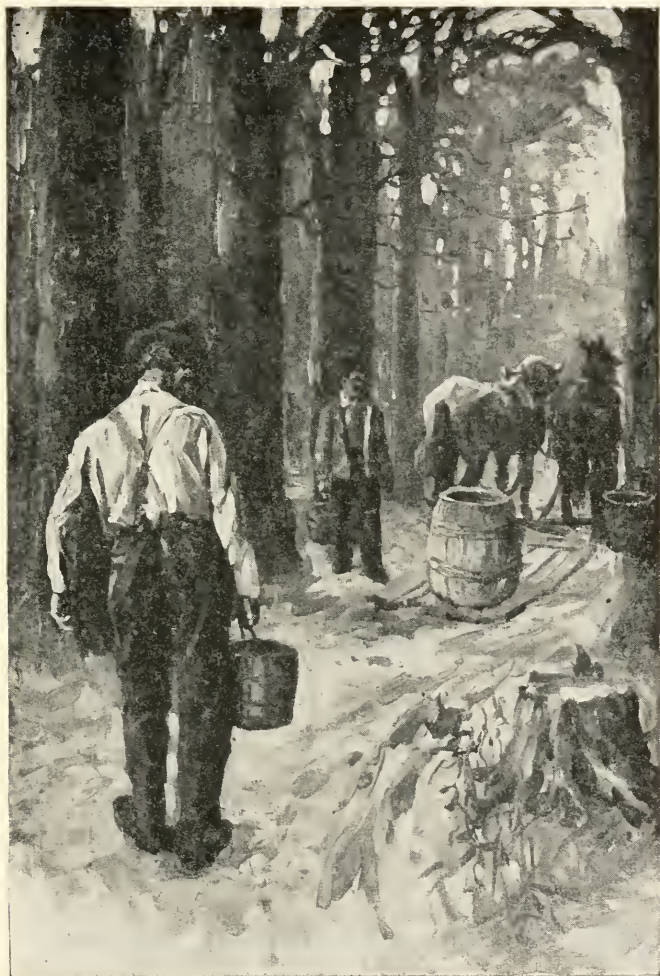


HOOSIER SPRING-POETRY

WHEN ever'thing's a-goin' like she's got-a-goin'
now,—

The maple-sap a-drippin', and the buds on ever'
bough

A-sorto' reachin' up'ards all a-trimblin', ever' one,
Like 'bout a million brownie-fists a-shakin' at the
sun!



HOOSIER SPRING-POETRY

The childern wants their shoes off 'fore their break-
fast, and the Spring
Is here so good-and-plenty that the old hen has to
sing!—

When things is goin' *thisaway*, w'y, that's the sign,
you know,

That ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!
Old Winter's up and dusted, with his dratted frost
and snow—

The ice is out the crick ag'in, the freeze is out the
ground,

And you'll see faces thawin' too ef you'll jes look
around!—

The bluebird's landin' home ag'in, and glad to git
the chance,

'Cause here's where he belongs at, that's a settled
circumstance!

And him and mister robin now's a-chunin' fer the
show.

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

HOOSIER SPRING-POETRY

The sun ain't jes p'tendin' *now!*—The ba'm is in the breeze—

The trees'll soon be green as grass, and grass as green as trees;

The buds is all jes *eechin'*, and the dogwood down the run

Is bound to bu'st out laughin' 'fore another week is done;

The bees is wakin', gap'y-like, and fumblin' fer their buzz,

A-thinkin', ever-wakefuler, of other days that wuz,—
When all the land wuz orchard-blooms and clover,
don't you know. . . .

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!





A FULL HARVEST

SEEMS like a feller'd ort 'o jes' to-day
Git down and roll and waller, don't you know
In that-air stubble, and flop up and crow,
Seein' sich craps! I'll undertake to say
There're no wheat's ever turned out thataway
Afore this season!—Folks is keerless tho',
And too fergitful—'caze we'd ort 'o show
More thankfulness!—Jes' looky hyonder, hey? - -
And watch that little reaper wadin' thue
That last old yaller hunk o' harvest-ground—
Jes' natchur'ly a-slicin' it in-two
Like honey-comb, and gaumin' it around
The field—like it had nothin' else to do
On'y jes' waste it all on me and you!



LULLABY

THE maple strews the embers of its leaves
O'er the laggard swallows nestled 'neath the
eaves;
And the moody cricket falters in his cry—Baby-
bye!—
And the lid of night is falling o'er the sky—Baby-
bye!—
The lid of night is falling o'er the sky!



LULLABY

The rose is lying pallid, and the cup
Of the frosted calla-lily folded up;
And the breezes through the garden sob and sigh—

Baby-bye!—

O'er the sleeping blooms of summer where they lie—

Baby-bye!—

O'er the sleeping blooms of summer where they
lie!

Yet, Baby—O my Baby, for your sake
This heart of mine is ever wide awake,
And my love may never droop a drowsy eye—Baby-
bye!—

Till your own are wet above me when I die—Baby-
bye!—

Till your own are wet above me when I die.





THE CLOVER

SOME sings of the lily, and daisy, and rose,
And the pansies and pinks that the Summer-
time throws

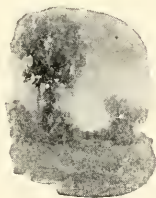
In the green grassy lap of the medder that lays
Blinkin' up at the skyes through the sunshiney days;
But what is the lily and all of the rest
Of the flowers, to a man with a hart in his brest
That was dipped brimmin' full of the honey and dew
Of the sweet clover-blossoms his babyhood knew?

THE CLOVER

I never set eyes on a clover-field now,
Er fool round a stable, er climb in the mow,
But my childhood comes back jest as clear and as
plane

As the smell of the clover I'm sniffin' again;
And I wunder away in a bare-footed dream,
Whare I tangle my toes in the blossoms that gleam
With the dew of the dawn of the morning of love
Ere it wept ore the graves that I'm weepin' above.

And so I love clover—it seems like a part
Of the sacerdest sorrows and joys of my hart;
And wharever it blossoms, oh, thare let me bow
And thank the good God as I'm thankin' Him now;
And I pray to Him still fer the stren'th when I die,
To go out in the clover and tell it good-bye,
And lovin'ly nestle my face in its bloom
While my soul slips away on a breth of purfume.





THE FISHING PARTY

WUNST we went a-fishin'—Me
An' my Pa an' Ma all three,
When they was a pic-nic, 'way
Out to Hanch's woods, one day.

An' they was a crick out there,
Where the fishes is, an' where
Little boys 'taint big an' strong,
Better have their folks along!



THE FISHING PARTY

My Pa he ist fished an' fished!
An' my Ma she said she wished
Me an' her was home; an' Pa
Said he wished so worse'n Ma.

Pa said ef you talk, er say
Anything, er sneeze, er play,
Hain't no fish, alive er dead,
Ever go' to bite! he said.

Purt' nigh dark in town when we
Got back home; an' Ma says she,
Now she'll have a fish fer shore!
An' she buyed one at the store.

Nen at supper, Pa he won't
Eat no fish, an' says he don't
Like 'em.—An' he pounded me
When I choked! . . . Ma, didn't he?





THE OLD SWIMMIN'-HOLE

OH! the old swimmin'-hole! Whare the crick so
still and deep
Looked like a baby-river that was laying half asleep,
And the gurgle of the worter round the drift jest
below
Sounded like the laugh of something we onc't ust to
know
Before we could remember anything but the eyes
Of the angels lookin' out as we left Paradise;
But the merry days of Youth is beyond our controle,
And it's hard to part ferever with the old swimmin'-
hole.



THE OLD SWIMMIN'-HOLE

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the happy days of
yore,

When I ust to lean above it on the old sickamore,

Oh! it showed me a face in its warm sunny tide

That gazed back at me so gay and glorified,

It made me love myself, as I leaped to caress

My shadder smilin' up at me with sich tenderness.

But them days is past and gone, and old Time's tuck
his toll

From the old man come back to the old swimmin'-
hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the long, lazy days

When the hum-drum of school made so many run-a-
ways,

How pleasant was the jurney down the old dusty lane,

Whare the tracks of our bare feet was all printed so
plane

You could tell by the dent of the heel and the sole

They was lots o' fun on hands at the old swimmin'-
hole.

But the lost joys is past! Let your tears in sorrow
roll

Like the rain that ust to dapple up the old swimmin'-
hole.

THE OLD SWIMMIN'-HOLE

Thare the bullrushes growed, and the cattails so tall,
And the sunshine and shadder fell over it all;
And it mottled the worter with amber and gold
Tel the glad lilies rocked in the ripples that rolled;
And the snake-feeder's four gauzy wings fluttered by
Like the ghost of a daisy dropped out of the sky,
Or a wounded apple-blossom in the breeze's controle,
As it cut acrost some orchurd to'rds the old swim-
min'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! When I last saw the
place,

The scenes was all changed, like the change in my
face;

The bridge of the railroad now crosses the spot
Whare the old divin'-log lays sunk and fergot.

And I stray down the banks whare the trees ust to
be—

But never again will theyr shade shelter me!

And I wish in my sorrow I could strip to the soul,

And dive off in my grave like the old swimmin'-hole.

FROM DELPHI TO CAMDEN

I

FROM Delphi to Camden—little Hoosier towns,—
But here were classic meadows, blooming dales
and downs;

And here were grassy pastures, dewy as the leas
Trampled over by the trains of royal pageantries!

And here the winding highway loitered through the
shade

Of the hazel covert, where, in ambuscade,
Loomed the larch and linden, and the greenwood-tree
Under which bold Robin Hood loud hallooed to me!

Here the stir and riot of the busy day
Dwindled to the quiet of the breath of May;
Gurgling brooks, and ridges lily-marged and spanned
By the rustic bridges found in Wonderland!

FROM DELPHI TO CAMDEN

From Delphi to Camden,—from Camden back
again!—

And now the night was on us, and the lightning and
the rain;

And still the way was wondrous with the flash of
hill and plain,—

The stars like printed asterisks—the moon a murky
stain!

And I thought of tragic idyl, and of flight and hot
pursuit,

And the jingle of the bridle and cuirass and spur on
boot,

As our horses' hooves struck showers from the flinty
boulders set

In freshet-ways of writhing reed and drowning
violet.

And we passed beleaguered castles, with their battle-
ments a-frown;

Where a tree fell in the forest was a turret toppled
down;

While my master and commander—the brave knight
I galloped with

On this reckless road to ruin or to fame was—Dr.
Smith!



THE ALL-GOLDEN

I

THROUGH every happy line I sing
I feel the tonic of the Spring.
The day is like an old-time face
That gleams across some grassy place—
An old-time face—an old-time chum
Who rises from the grave to come
And lure me back along the ways
Of time's all-golden yesterdays.

THE ALL-GOLDEN

Sweet day! to thus remind me of
The truant boy I used to love—
To set, once more, his finger-tips
Against the blossom of his lips,
And pipe for me the signal known
By none but him and me alone!

II

I see, across the school-room floor,
The shadow of the open door,
And dancing dust and sunshine blent
Slanting the way the morning went,
And beckoning my thoughts afar
Where reeds and running waters are;
Where amber-colored bayous glass
The half-drown'd weeds and wisps of grass.
Where sprawling frogs, in loveless key,
Sing on and on incessantly.
Against the green wood's dim expanse
The cattail tilts its tufted lance,
While on its tip—one might declare
The white "snake-feeder" blossomed there!



THE ALL-GOLDEN

III

I catch my breath as children do
In woodland swings when life is new,
And all the blood is warm as wine
And tingles with a tang divine.
My soul soars up the atmosphere
And sings aloud where God can hear,
And all my being leans intent
To mark His smiling wonderment.
O gracious dream, and gracious time,
And gracious theme, and gracious rhyme—
When buds of Spring begin to blow
In blossoms that we used to know
And lure us back along the ways
Of time's all-golden yesterdays!



THE KING

THEY rode right out of the morning sun—
A glimmering, glittering cavalcade
Of knights and ladies and every one
In princely sheen arrayed;
And the king of them all, O he rode ahead,
With a helmet of gold, and a plume of red
That spurted about in the breeze and bled
In the bloom of the everglade.

And they rode right over the dewy lawn,
With brave, glad banners of every hue
That rolled in ripples, as they rode on
In splendor, two and two;
And the tinkling links of the golden reins
Of the steeds they rode rang such refrains
As the castanets in a dream of Spain's
Intensest gold and blue.

THE KING

And they rode and rode; and the steeds they neighed
And pranced, and the sun on their glossy hides
Flickered and lightened and glanced and played
Like the moon on rippling tides;
And their manes were silken, and thick and strong,
And their tails were flossy, and fetlock-long,
And jostled in time to the teeming throng,
And their knightly song besides.

Clank of scabbard and jingle of spur,
And the fluttering sash of the queen went wild
In the wind, and the proud king glanced at her
As one at a wilful child,—
And as knight and lady away they flew,
And the banners flapped, and the falcon, too,
And the lances flashed and the bugle blew,
He kissed his hand and smiled.—

And then, like a slanting sunlit shower,
The pageant glittered across the plain,
And the turf spun back, and the wildweed flower
Was only a crimson stain.
And a dreamer's eyes they are downward cast,
As he blends these words with the wailing blast:
"It is the King of the Year rides past!"
And Autumn is here again.



WITH THE CURRENT

RAREST mood of all the year!
Aimless, idle, and content—
Sky and wave and atmosphere
Wholly indolent.

Little daughter, loose the band
From your tresses—let them pour
Shadow-like o'er arm and hand
Idling at the oar.



WITH THE CURRENT

Low and clear, and pure and deep,
Ripples of the river sing—
Water-lilies, half asleep,
Drowsed with listening:

Tremulous reflex of skies—
Skies above and skies below,—
Paradise and Paradise
Blending even so!

Blossoms with their leaves unrolled
Laughingly, as they were lips
Cleft with ruddy beaten gold
Tongues of pollen-tips.

Rush and reed, and thorn and vine,
Clumped with grasses lithe and tall—
With a web of summer-shine
Woven round it all.

Back and forth, and to and fro—
Flashing scale and wing as one,—
Dragon-flies that come and go,
Shuttled by the sun.

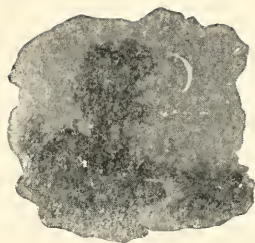
WITH THE CURRENT

Fairy lilts and lullabies,
 Fine as fantasy conceives,—
Echoes wrought of cricket-cries
 Sifted through the leaves.

O'er the rose, with drowsy buzz,
 Hangs the bee, and stays his kiss,
Even as my fancy does,
 Gypsy, over this.

Let us both be children—share
 Youth's glad voyage night and day,
Drift adown it, half aware,
 Anywhere we may.—

Drift and curve and deviate,
 Veer and eddy, float and flow,
Waver, swerve and undulate,
 As the bubbles go.



SLUMBER-SONG

SLEEP, little one! The Twilight folds her gloom
Full tenderly about the drowsy Day,
And all his tinsel'd hours of light and bloom
Like toys are laid away.

Sleep! sleep! The noon-sky's airy cloud of white
Has deepened wide o'er all the azure plain;
And, trailing through the leaves, the skirts of Night
Are wet with dews as rain.

But rest thou sweetly, smiling in thy dreams,
With round fists tossed like roses o'er thy head,
And thy tranc'd lips and eyelids kissed with gleams
Of rapture perfected.



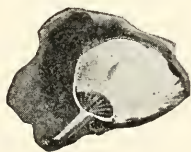
THE BALLADE OF THE COMING RAIN

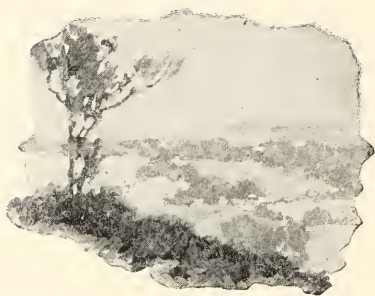
WHEN the morning swoons in its highest heat,
And the sunshine dims, and no dark shade
Streaks the dust of the dazzling street,
And the long straw splits in the lemonade;
When the circus lags in a sad parade,
And the drum throbs dull as a pulse of pain,
And the breezeless flags hang limp and frayed—
Oh, then is the time to look for rain.

THE BALLADE OF THE COMING RAIN

When the man on the watering cart bumps by,
Trilling the air of an old fife-tune,
With a dull, soiled smile, and one shut eye,
Lost in a dream of the afternoon;
When the awning sags like a lank balloon,
And a thick sweat stands on the window-pane,
And a five-cent fan is a priceless boon—
Oh, then is the time to look for rain.

When the goldfish tank is a grimy gray,
And the dummy stands at the clothing store
With a cap pulled on in a rakish way,
And a rubber-coat with the hind before;
When the man in the barber chair flops o'er
And the chin he wags has a telltale stain,
And the bootblack lurks at the open door—
Oh, then is the time to look for rain.





THE MUSKINGUM VALLEY

THE Muskingum Valley!—How longin' the gaze
A feller throws back on its long summer-days,
When the smiles of its blossoms and *my* smiles wuz
one-

And-the-same, from the rise to the set o' the sun:



THE MUSKINGUM VALLEY

Wher' the hills sloped as soft as the dawn down to
noon,

And the river run by like an old fiddle-tune,
And the hours glided past as the bubbles 'ud glide,
All so loaferin'-like, 'long the path o' the tide.

In the Muskingum Valley—it 'peared like the skies
Looked lovin' on me as my own mother's eyes,
While the laughin'-sad song of the stream seemed
to be

Like a lullaby angels was wastin' on me—
Tel, swimmin' the air, like the gossamer's thread,
'Twixt the blue underneath and the blue overhead,
My thoughts went a-stray in that so-to-speak realm
Wher' Sleep bared her breast as a pillar fer them.

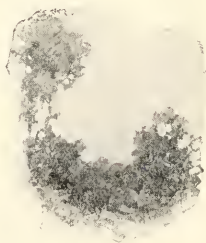
In the Muskingum Valley, though far, far a-way,
I know that the winter is bleak there to-day—
No bloom ner perfume on the brambles er trees—
Wher' the buds used to bloom, now the icicles
freeze.—

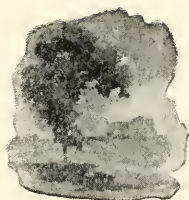
That the grass is all hid 'long the side of the road
Wher' the deep snow has drifted and shifted and
blowed—

And I feel in my life the same changes is there,—
The frost in my heart, and the snow in my hair.

THE MUSKINGUM VALLEY

But, Muskingum Valley! my memory sees
Not the white on the ground, but the green in the
 trees—
Not the froze'-over gorge, but the current, as clear
And warm as the drop that has jes trickled here;
Not the choked-up ravine, and the hills topped with
 snow,
But the grass and the blossoms I knowed long ago
When my little bare feet wundered down 'wher' the
 stream
In the Muskingum Valley flowed on like a dream.





A NOON INTERVAL

A DEEP, delicious hush in earth and sky—
A gracious lull—since, from its wakening,
The morn has been a feverish, restless thing
In which the pulse of Summer ran too high
And riotous, as though its heart went nigh
To bursting with delights past uttering:
Now, as an o'erjoyed child may cease to sing
All falteringly at play, with drowsy eye
Draining the pictures of a fairy-tale
To brim his dreams with—there comes o'er the day
A loathful silence, wherein all sounds fail
Like loitering tones of some faint roundelay . . .
No wakeful effort longer may avail—
The wand waves, and the dozer sinks away.

THE YELLOW-BIRD

HEY! my little Yellow-bird,
What you doing there?
Like a flashing sun-ray,
Flitting everywhere:
Dangling down the tall weeds
And the hollyhocks,
And the lordly sunflowers
Along the garden-walks.

Ho! my gallant Golden-bill,
Pecking 'mongst the weeds,
You must have for breakfast
Golden flower-seeds:
Won't you tell a little fellow
What you have for *tea*?—
'Spect a peck o' yellow, mellow
Pippin on the tree.





DAWN, NOON AND DEWFALL

DAWN, noon and dewfall! Bluebird and robin
Up and at it airly, and the orchard-blossoms
bobbin'!

Peekin' from the winder, half-awake, and wishin'
I could go to sleep ag'in as well as go a-fishin'!

DAWN, NOON AND DEWFALL

On the apern o' the dam, legs a-danglin' over,
Drowsy-like with sound o' worter and the smell o'
 clover:

Fish all out a-visitin'—'cept some dratted minnor!
Yes, and mill shet down at last and hands is gone to
 dinner.

Trompin' home acrost the fields: Lightnin'-bugs a-
 blinkin'

In the wheat like sparks o' things feller keeps
 a-thinkin':—

Mother waitin' supper, and the childern there to
 cherr me!

And fiddle on the kitchen-wall a-jist a-eechin' fer me!





A SONG

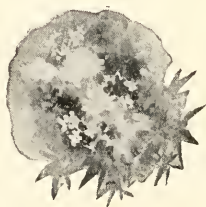
THERE is ever a song somewhere, my dear;
There is ever a something sings alway:
There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,
And the song of the thrush when the skies are
gray
The sunshine showers across the grain,
And the bluebird trills in the orchard trees;
And in and out, when the eaves drip rain,
The swallows are twittering ceaselessly.

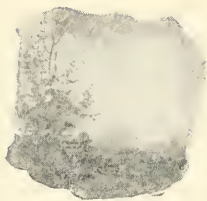
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above or dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear—
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear—
There is ever a song somewhere!

A SONG

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
In the midnight black, or the mid-day blue:
The robin pipes when the sun is here,
And the cricket chirrups the whole night through.
The buds may blow, and the fruit may grow,
And the autumn leaves drop crisp and sear;
But whether the sun, or the rain, or the snow,
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above or dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear—
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear—
There is ever a song somewhere!





JUNE

O QUEENLY month of indolent repose!
I drink thy breath in sips of rare perfume,
As in thy downy lap of clover-bloom
I nestle like a drowsy child and doze
The lazy hours away. The zephyr throws
The shifting shuttle of the Summer's loom
And weaves a damask-work of gleam and gloom
Before thy listless feet. The lily blows
A bugle-call of fragrance o'er the glade;
And, wheeling into ranks, with plume and
spear,
Thy harvest-armies gather on parade;
While, faint and far away, yet pure and clear,
A voice calls out of alien lands of shade:—
All hail the Peerless Goddess of the Year!

THE LITTLE RED RIBBON

THE little red ribbon, the ring and the rose!
The summertime comes and the summertime
goes—

And never a blossom in all of the land
As white as the gleam of her beckoning hand!

The long winter months, and the glare of the snows;
The little red ribbon, the ring and the rose!
And never a glimmer of sun in the skies
As bright as the light of her glorious eyes!

Dreams only are true; but they fade and are gone—
For her face is not here when I waken at dawn;
The little red ribbon, the ring and the rose
Mine only; *hers* only the dream and repose.

I am weary of waiting, and weary of tears,
And my heart wearies, too, all these desolate years,
Moaning over the one only song that it knows,—
The little red ribbon, the ring and the rose!





THE BROOK-SONG

LITTLE brook! Little brook!
You have such a happy look—
Such a very merry manner, as you swerve and
curve and crook—
And your ripples, one and one,
Reach each other's hands and run
Like laughing little children in the sun!

THE BROOK-SONG

Little brook, sing to me :
Sing about a bumblebee
That tumbled from a lily-bell and grumbled
mumbly, mumbly,
Because he wet the film
Of his wings, and had to swim,
While the water-bugs raced round and
laughed at him !

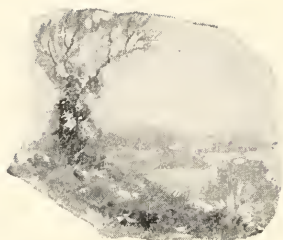
Little brook—sing a song
Of a leaf that sailed along
Down the golden-braided centre of your current
swift and strong,
And a dragon-fly that lit
On the tilting rim of it,
And rode away and wasn't scared a bit.

And sing—how oft in glee
Came a truant boy like me,
Who loved to lean and listen to your lilting
melody,
Till the gurgle and refrain
Of your music in his brain
Wrought a happiness as keen to him as
pain.

THE BROOK-SONG

Little brook—laugh and leap!
Do not let the dreamer weep:
Sing him all the songs of summer till he sink in
 softest sleep;
And then sing soft and low
Through his dreams of long ago—
 Sing back to him the rest he used to
 know!





A SUMMER AFTERNOON

A LANGUID atmosphere, a lazy breeze,
With labored respiration, moves the wheat
From distant reaches, till the golden seas
Break in crisp whispers at my feet.

My book, neglected of an idle mind,
Hides for a moment from the eyes of men;
Or, lightly opened by a critic wind,
Affrightedly reviews itself again.

Off though the haze that dances in the shine
The warm sun showers in the open glade,
The forest lies, a silhouette design
Dimmed through and through with shade.

A SUMMER AFTERNOON

A dreamy day; and tranquilly I lie
At anchor from all storms of mental strain;
With absent vision, gazing at the sky,
“Like one that hears it rain.”

The Katydid, so boisterous last night,
Clinging, inverted, in uneasy poise,
Beneath a wheat-blade, has forgotten quite
If “Katy *did* or *didn't*” make a noise.

The twitter, sometimes, of a wayward bird
That checks the song abruptly at the sound,
And mildly, chiding echoes that have stirred,
Sink into silence, all the more profound.

And drowsily I hear the plaintive strain
Of some poor dove . . . Why, I can
scarcely keep
My heavy eyelids—there it is again—
“Coo-coo!”—I mustn’t—“Coo-coo!”—fall
asleep!

GREEN FIELDS AND RUNNING BROOKS

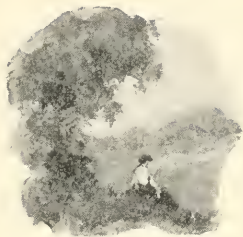
HO! green fields and running brooks!
Knotted strings and fishing-hooks
Of the truant, stealing down
Weedy back-ways of the town.

Where the sunshine overlooks,
By green fields and running brooks,
All intruding guests of chance
With a golden tolerance.

Cooing doves, or pensive pair
Of picnickers, straying there—
By green fields and running brooks,
Sylvan shades and mossy nooks!

And—O Dreamer of the Days,
Murmurer of roundelays
All unsung of words or books,
Sing green fields and running brooks!





ONE AFTERNOON

BELOW, cool grasses: over us
The maples waver tremulous.

A slender overture above,
Low breathing as a sigh of love.

At first, then gradually strong
And stronger: 'tis the locust's song,

Swoln midway to a pæan of glee,
And lost in silence dwindlingly.

Not utter silence; nay, for hid
In ghosts of it, the katydid

Chirrs a diluted echo of
The loveless song he makes us love.

ONE AFTERNOON

The low boughs are drugged heavily
With shade; the poem you read to me

Is not more gracious than the trill
Of birds that twitter as they will.

Half consciously, with upturned eyes,
I hear your voice—I see the skies,

Where, o'er bright rifts, the swallows
glance

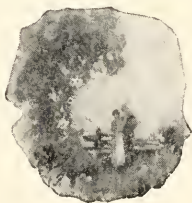
Like glad thoughts o'er a countenance;

And voices near and far are blent
Like sweet chords of some instrument

Awakened by the trembling touch
Of hands that love it overmuch.

Dear heart, let be the book a while!
I want your face—I want your smile!

Tell me how gladder now are they
Who look on us from Heaven to-day.





A VISION OF SUMMER

TWAS a marvelous vision of Summer.—
That morning the dawn was late,
And came, like a long dream-ridden guest,
Through the gold of the Eastern gate.

Languid it came, and halting
As one that yawned, half roused,
With lifted arms and indolent lids
And eyes that drowsed and drowsed.

A VISION OF SUMMER

A glimmering haze hung over
The face of the smiling air;
And the green of the trees and the blue of the leas
And the skies gleamed everywhere.

And the dewdrops' dazzling jewels,
In garlands and diadems,
Lightened and twinkled and glanced and shot
As the glints of a thousand gems:

Emeralds of dew on the grasses;
The rose with rubies set;
On the lily, diamonds; and amethysts
Pale on the violet.

And there were the pinks of the fuchsias,
And the peony's crimson hue,
The lavender of the hollyhocks,
And the morning-glory's blue:

The purple of the pansy bloom,
And the passionate flush of the face
Of the velvet-rose; and the thick perfume
Of the locust every place.



A VISION OF SUMMER

The air and the sun and the shadows
Were wedded and made as one;
And the winds ran over the meadows
As little children run:

And the winds poured over the meadows
And along the willowy way
The river ran, with its ripples shod
With the sunshine of the day:

O the winds flowed over the meadows
In a tide of eddies and calms,
And the bared brow felt the touch of it
As a sweetheart's tender palms.

And the lark went palpitating
Up through the glorious skies,
His song spilled down from the blue profound
As a song from Paradise.

And here was the loitering current—
Stayed by a drift of sedge
And sodden logs—scummed thick with the gold
Of the pollen from edge to edge.

A VISION OF SUMMER

The catbird piped in the hazel,
And the harsh kingfisher screamed;
And the crane, in amber and oozy swirls,
Dozed in the reeds and dreamed.

And in through the tumbled driftage
And the tangled roots below,
The waters warbled and gurgled and lisped
Like the lips of long ago.

And the senses caught, through the music,
Twinkles of dabbling feet,
And glimpses of faces in coverts green,
And voices faint and sweet.

And back from the lands enchanted,
Where my earliest mirth was born,
The trill of a laugh was blown to me
Like the blare of an elfin horn.

Again I romped through the clover;
And again I lay supine
On grassy swards, where the skies, like eyes,
Looked lovingly back to mine.



A VISION OF SUMMER

And over my vision floated
Misty illusive things—
Trailing strands of the gossamer
On heavenward wanderings:

Figures that veered and wavered,
Luring the sight, and then
Glancing away into nothingness,
And blinked into shape again.

From out far depths of the forest,
Ineffably sad and lorn,
Like the yearning cry of a long-lost love,
The moan of the dove was borne.

And through lush glooms of the thicket
The flash of the redbird's wings
On branches of star-white blooms that shook
And thrilled with its twitterings.

Through mossy and viny vistas,
Soaked ever with deepest shade,
Dimly the dull owl stared and stared
From his bosky ambushade.

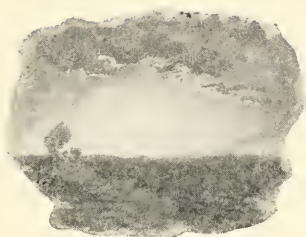
A VISION OF SUMMER

And up through the rifted tree-tops
That signaled the wayward breeze,
I saw the hulk of the hawk becalmed
Far out on the azure seas.

Then sudden an awe fell on me,
As the hush of the golden day
Rounded to noon, as a May to June
That a lover has dreamed away.

And I heard, in the breathless silence,
And the full, glad light of the sun,
The tinkle and drip of a timorous shower—
Ceasing as it begun.

And my thoughts, like the leaves and grasses,
In a rapture of joy and pain,
Seemed fondled and petted and beat upon
With a tremulous patter of rain.



A SUMMER SUNRISE

AFTER LEE O. HARRIS

THE master-hand whose pencils trace
This wondrous landscape of the morn,
Is but the sun, whose glowing face
Reflects the rapture and the grace
Of inspiration Heaven-born.

And yet with vision-dazzled eyes,
I see the lotus-lands of old,
Where odorous breezes fall and rise,
And mountains, peering in the skies,
Stand ankle-deep in lakes of gold.

A SUMMER SUNRISE

And, spangled with the shine and shade,
I see the rivers raveled out
In strands of silver, slowly fade
In threads of light along the glade
Where truant roses hide and pout.

The tamarind on gleaming sands
Droops drowsily beneath the heat;
And bowed as though aweary, stands
The stately palm, with lazy hands
That fold their shadows round his feet.

And mistily, as through a veil,
I catch the glances of a sea
Of sapphire, dimpled with a gale
Toward Colch's blowing, where the sail
Of Jason's Argo beckons me.

And gazing on and farther yet,
I see the isles enchanted, bright
With fretted spire and parapet,
And gilded mosque and minaret,
That glitter in the crimson light.

A SUMMER SUNRISE

But as I gaze, the city's walls
Are keenly smitten with a gleam
Of pallid splendor, that appalls
The fancy as the ruin falls
In ashen embers of a dream.

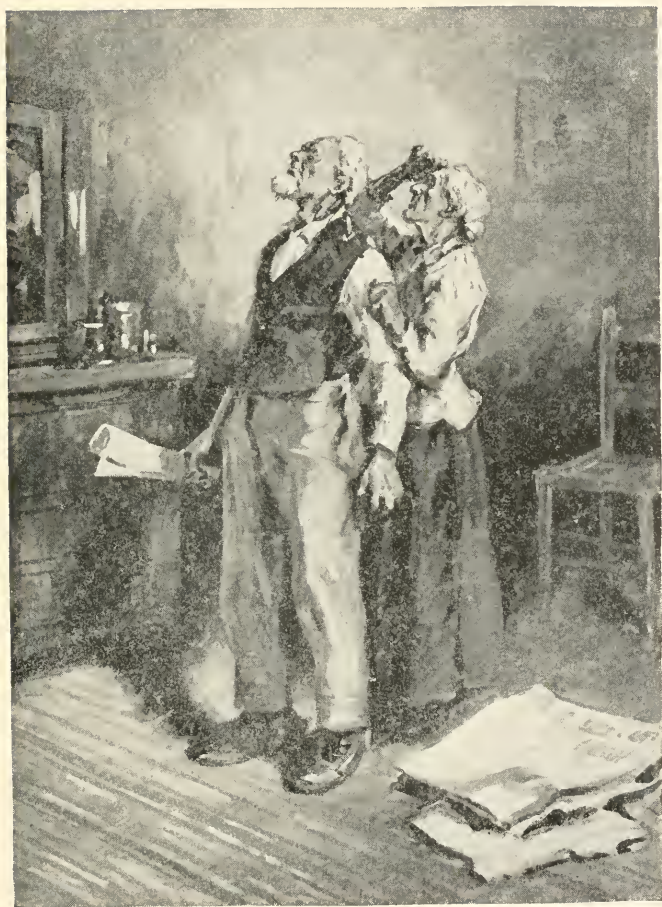
Yet over all the waking earth
The tears of night are brushed away,
And eyes are lit with love and mirth,
And benisons of richest worth
Go up to bless the new-born day.





TWO SONNETS TO THE JUNE-BUG

YOU make me jes' a little nervouser
Than any dog-gone bug I ever see!
And you know night's the time to pester me—
When any tetch at all 'll rub the fur
Of all my patience back'ards! You're the myrrh
And ruburb of my life! A bumblebee
Cain't hold a candle to you; and a he
Bald hornet, with a laminated spur
In his hip-pocket, daresent even cheep
When you're around! And, dern ye! you have
made
Me lose whole ricks, and stacks, and piles of sleep,—
And many of a livelong night I've laid
And never shut an eye, hearin' you keep
Up that eternal buzzin' serenade!



TWO SONNETS TO THE JUNE-BUG

II

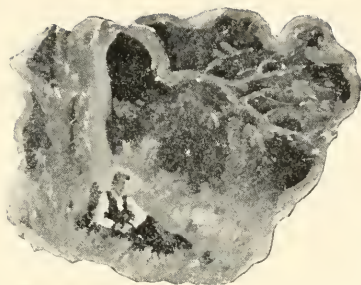
And I've got up and lit the lamp, and clum
On cheers and trunks and wash-stands and bu-
reaus,
And all such dangerous articles as those,
And biffed at you with brooms, and never come
In two feet of you,—maybe skeered you some,—
But what does that amount to when it throws
A feller out o' balance, and his nose
Gits barked ag'inst the mantel, while you hum
Fer joy around the room, and churn your head
Ag'inst the ceilin', and draw back and butt
The plasterin' loose, and drop—behind the bed,
Where never human-bein' ever putt
Harm's hand on you, or ever truthful said
He'd choked your dern infernal wizzen shut!



A WATER-COLOR

LOW hidden in among the forest trees
An artist's tilted easel, ankle-deep
In tousled ferns and mosses, and in these
A fluffy water-spaniel, half asleep
Beside a sketch-book and a fallen hat—
A little wicker flask tossed into that.

A sense of utter carelessness and grace
Of pure abandon in the slumb'rous scene,—
As if the June, all hoydenish of face,
Had romped herself to sleep there on the green,
And brink and sagging bridge and sliding
stream
Were just romantic parcels of her dream.



UNINTERPRETED

SUPINELY we lie in the grove's shady greenery,
Gazing, all dreamy-eyed, up through the
trees,—

And as to the sight is the heavenly scenery,
So to the hearing the sigh of the breeze.

UNINTERPRETED

We catch but vague rifts of the blue through the
wavering

Boughs of the maples; and, like undefined,
The whispers and lisps of the leaves, faint and
quavering,

Meaningless falter and fall on the mind.

The vine, with its beauty of blossom, goes rioting

Up by the casement, as sweet to the eye
As the trill of the robin is restful and quieting
Heard in a drowse with the dawn in the sky.

And yet we yearn on to learn more of the mystery—

We see and we hear, but forever remain
Mute, blind and deaf to the ultimate history
Born of a rose or a patter of rain.



THE LAUGHTER OF THE RAIN

*The rain sounds like a laugh to me—
A low laugh poured out limpidly.*

MY very soul smiles as I listen to
The low, mysterious laughter of the rain,
Poured musically over heart and brain
Till sodden care, soaked with it through and through,
Sinks; and, with wings wet with it as with dew,
My spirit flutters up, with every stain
Rinsed from its plumage, and as white again
As when the old laugh of the rain was new.
Then laugh on, happy Rain! laugh louder yet!—
Laugh out in torrent-bursts of watery mirth;
Unlock thy lips of purple cloud, and let
Thy liquid merriment baptize the earth,
And wash the sad face of the world, and set
The universe to music dripping-wet!



A FRUIT-PIECE

THE afternoon of summer folds
Its warm arms round the marigolds,
And, with its gleaming fingers, pets
The watered pinks and violets
That from the casement vases spill,
Over the cottage window-sill,
Their fragrance down the garden walks
Where droop the dry-mouthed hollyhocks.
How vividly the sunshine scrawls
The grape-vine shadows on the walls!



A FRUIT-PIECE

How like a truant swings the breeze
In high boughs of the apple-trees!

The slender "free-stone" lifts aloof,
Full languidly above the roof,

A hoard of fruitage, stamped with gold
And precious mintings manifold.

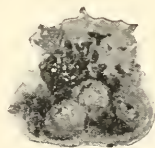
High up, through curled green leaves, a pear
Hangs hot with ripeness here and there.

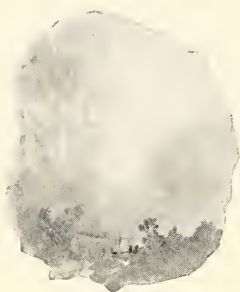
Beneath the sagging trellisings,
In lush, lack-luster clusterings,

Great torpid grapes, all fattened through
With moon and sunshine, shade and dew,

Until their swollen girths express
But forms of limp deliciousness—

Drugged to an indolence divine
With heaven's own sacramental wine.





A DREAM OF LONG AGO

LYING listless in the mosses
Underneath a tree that tosses
Flakes of sunshine, and embosses
Its green shadow with the snow—
Drowsy-eyed, I think in slumber
Born of fancies without number—
Tangled fancies that encumber
Me with dreams of long ago.

A DREAM OF LONG AGO

Ripples of the river singing;
And the water-lilies swinging
Bells of Parian, and ringing
 Peals of perfume faint and fine,
While old forms and fairy faces
Leap from out their hiding-places
In the past, with glad embraces
 Fraught with kisses sweet as wine.

Willows dip their slender fingers
O'er the little fisher's stringers
While he baits his hook and lingers
 Till the shadows gather dim;
And afar off comes a calling
Like the sounds of water falling,
With the lazy echoes drawling
 Messages of haste to him.

Little naked feet that tinkle
Through the stubble-fields, and twinkle
Down the winding road, and sprinkle
 Little mists of dusty rain,

A DREAM OF LONG AGO

While in pasture-lands the cattle
Cease their grazing with a rattle
Of the bells whose clappers tattle
To their masters down the lane.

Trees that hold their tempting treasures
O'er the orchard's hedge embrasures,
Furnish their forbidden pleasures
As in Eden lands of old;
And the coming of the master
Indicates a like disaster
To the frightened heart that faster
Beats pulsations manifold.

Puckered lips whose pipings tingle
In staccato notes that mingle
Musically with the jingle—
Haunted winds that lightly fan
Mellow twilights, crimson-tinted
By the sun, and picture-printed
Like a book that sweetly hinted
Of the Nights Arabian.

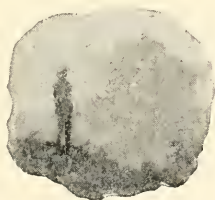
A DREAM OF LONG AGO

Porticoes with columns plaited
And entwined with vines and freighted
With a bloom all radiated

With the light of moon and star;
Where some tender voice is winging
In sad flights of song, and singing
To the dancing fingers flinging
Dripping from the sweet guitar.

Would my dreams were never taken
From me: that with faith unshaken
I might sleep and never waken

On a weary world of woe!
Links of love would never sever
As I dreamed them, never, never!
I would glide along forever
Through the dreams of long ago.





THE GREAT GOD PAN

What was he doing, the great god Pan?

—MRS. BROWNING

O PAN is the goodliest god, I wist,
Of all of the lovable gods that be!—
For his two strong hands were the first to twist
From the depths of the current, through spatter and
mist,
The long-hushed reeds that he pressed in glee
To his murmurous mouth, as he chuckled and kissed
Their souls into melody.



THE GREAT GOD PAN

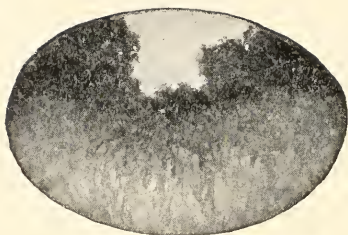
And the wanton winds are in love with Pan:

They loll in the shade with him day by day;
And betimes as beast, and betimes as man,
They love him as only the wild winds can,—
Or sleeking the coat of his limbs one way,
Or brushing his brow with the locks they fan
To the airs he loves to play.

And he leans by the river, in gloom and gleam,

Blowing his reeds as the breezes blow—
His cheeks puffed out, and his eyes in a dream,
And his hoof-tips, over the leaves in the stream,
Tapping the time of the tunes that flow
As sweet as the drowning echoes seem
To his rollicking wraith below.





'MONGST THE HILLS O' SOMERSET

'MONGST the Hills o' Somerset
Wisht I was a-roamin' yet!
My feet won't get usen to
These low lands I'm trompin' through.
Wisht I could go back there, and
Stroke the long grass with my hand,
Kind o' like my sweetheart's hair
Smoothed out underneath it there!
Wisht I could set eyes once more
On our shadders, on before,
Climbin', in the airly dawn,
Up the slopes 'at love growed on
Natchurl as the violet
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

'MONGST THE HILLS O' SOMERSET

How 't 'u'd rest a man like me
Jes' fer 'bout an hour to be
Up there where the morning air
Could reach out and ketch me there!—
Snatch my breath away, and then
Rensh and give it back again
Fresh as dew, and smellin' of
The old pinks I ust to love,
And a-flavor'n' ever' breeze
With mixt hints o' mulberries
And May-apples, from the thick
Bottom-lands along the crick
Where the fish bit, dry er wet,
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Like a livin' pictur' things
All comes back: the bluebird swings
In the maple, tongue and bill
Trillin' glory fit to kill!
In the orchard, jay and bee
Ripens the first pears fer me,
And the "Prince's Harvest" they
Tumble to me where I lay
In the clover, provin' still
"A boy's will is the wind's will."

'MONGST THE HILLS O' SOMERSET

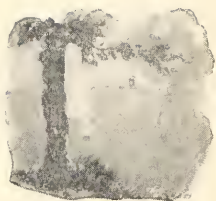
Clean fergot is time, and care,
And thick hearin', and gray hair—
But they's nothin' I ferget
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Middle-aged—to be edzact,
Very middle-aged, in fact,
Yet a-thinkin' back to then,
I'm the same wild boy again!
There's the dear old home once more,
And there's Mother at the door—
Dead, I know, fer thirty year',
Yet she's singin', and I hear;
And there's Jo, and Mary Jane,
And Pap, comin' up the lane!
Dusk's a-fallin'; and the dew,
'Pears like, it's a-fallin' too—
Dreamin' we're all livin' yet
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!



PAN

THIS Pan is but an idle god, I guess,
Since all the fair midsummer of my dreams
He loiters listlessly by woody streams,
Soaking the lush glooms up with laziness;
Or drowsing while the maiden-winds caress
Him prankishly, and powder him with gleams
Of sifted sunshine. And he ever seems
Drugged with a joy unutterable—unless
His low pipes whistle hints of it far out
Across the ripples to the dragon-fly
That, like a wind-born blossom blown about,
Drops quiveringly down, as though to die—
Then lifts and wavers on, as if in doubt
Whether to fan his wings or fly without.



JUNE AT WOODRUFF

OUT at Woodruff Place—afar
From the city's glare and jar,
With the leafy trees, instead
Of the awnings, overhead;
With the shadows cool and sweet,
For the fever of the street;
With the silence, like a prayer,
Breathing round us everywhere.

Gracious anchorage, at last,
From the billows of the vast
Tide of life that comes and goes,
Whence and where nobody knows—



JUNE AT WOODRUFF

Moving, like a skeptic's thought,
Out of nowhere into naught.
Touch and tame us with thy grace,
Placid calm of Woodruff Place!

Weave a wreath of beechen leaves
For the brow that throbs and grieves
O'er the ledger, bloody-lined,
'Neath the sunstruck window-blind!
Send the breath of woodland bloom
Through the sick man's prison-room,
Till his old farm-home shall swim
Sweet in mind to hearten him!

Out at Woodruff Place the Muse
Dips her sandal in the dews,
Sacredly as night and dawn
Baptize lilled grove and lawn:
Woody path, or paven way—
She doth haunt them night and day,—
Sun or moonlight through the trees,
To her eyes, are melodies.

JUNE AT WOODRUFF

Swinging lanterns, twinkling clear
Through night-scenes, are songs to her—
Tinted lilts and choiring hues,
Blent with children's glad halloos;
Then belated lays that fade
Into midnight's serenade—
Vine-like words and zithern-strings
Twined through all her slumberings.

Blessèd be each hearthstone set
Neighboring the violet!
Blessèd every roof-tree prayed
Over by the beech's shade!
Blessèd doorway, opening where
We may look on Nature—there
Hand to hand and face to face—
Storied realm, or Woodruff Place.



CENTRAL CIRCULATION
CHILDREN'S ROOM

